GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
LABOUR
LOK SABHA

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:2158
ANSWERED ON:12.03.2001
INCREASE IN DAILY WAGES
THAAWAR CHAND GEHLOT

Will the Minister of LABOUR be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government have any proposal to increase the daily wages of rural labourers;

(b) if so, the details thereof and if not, the reasons therefor;

(c) the reasons for the difference in the daily wages of urban labourers and the rural labourers;

(d) the measures taken by the government to ensure equality in wages between the above mentioned categories; and

(e) the details of the daily wages being paid to urban and rural labourers, State-wise?

Answer

MINISTER OF STATE FOR LABOUR AND EMPLOYMENT (SHRI MUNI LALL)

(a) to (e): The Government does not fix/revise wages for rural/ urban labourers. However, under the statutory provisions of the Minimum Wages Act, 1948, both the Central and the State Governments are appropriate Governments to fix, revise and enforce payment of minimum wages to the workers engaged in the scheduled employments under their respective jurisdictions. Agriculture is a scheduled employment in both Central and state spheres. The Central Government revised the minimum wages of the agricultural labour in the Central sphere vide notification dated 11.11.1999. The revised minimum wages range from Rs.67/- to Rs.101/- per day depending on the categories of workers and the area. As regards State sphere, the State Governments have been periodically revising the minimum wages. There is disparity in the minimum wages in the rural and the urban areas because the fixation and the revision of the minimum wages depend on a number of factors like socio-economic and agro-climatic conditions, cost of living, paying capacity and the local conditions influencing the wage rate, which vary from State to State and industry to industry. However, the Central Government have been advising the State Governments to ensure reduction in the disparity in the minimum wages within the region. The Central Government have also floated the concept of national floor level minimum wage in the absence of a uniform minimum wage, based on the recommendations of the National Commission on Rural Labour and subsequent increase in the price level. In order to protect the minimum wages against inflation, the Central Government have introduced Variable Dearness Allowance (VDA) in all the scheduled employments in the Central sphere. As regards States, 22 States/Union Territory Administrations have adopted VDA as a component of minimum wages. The VDA in the Central sphere is revised twice a year effective from April and October. A statement showing the ranges of minimum wages in various states is enclosed.